From: Murphy, Patty
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2009 5:12 PM
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Cc: Miller, Paul; Hamlin, Shane; Handy, Nick; Kasselman, Russell; Huennekens, Bill; Speaks, Yalonda; 'Hunt, James'; Murphy, Patty
Subject: Review Board 2009

Good afternoon Washington State Review Board member,

Thank you so much for your willingness to serve on Washington State's Voting Systems Certification Review Board. Secretary Reed has approved your appointments beginning January 1, 2009. I have attached a list of the membership.

As you know, when a voting system vendor applies for state certification of a voting system we test the system and then present our findings to the Voting Systems Review Board for review and recommendation. The board includes independent experts in computer science or information technology, recognized experts in election administration, and representatives of the public at large. The services the Review Board provides are invaluable in helping us certify accurate systems, and important to the continued transparency in elections we strive to achieve.

I anticipate that the review board will be convening this spring for the certification of a new central count tabulation system for King County. Here is a little background:

King County is in the process of moving to a high-speed scanner solution for processing and tabulating ballots at central count. After a lengthy process to choose the vendor – they selected Premier (formerly Diebold), the vendor for their current system. They will keep their current accessible voting units (AVUs) and ballot layout and reporting software (GEMS), but add high speed tabulators and two new software modules.

PCS is the module that will run these high speed tabulators and allow the county to adjudicate the scanned ballots (similar to Hart's resolution process). With this product King County will be able to scan ballots as soon as they arrive at the county. Tabulation does not happen during the scanning process, so they can get ballots scanned and adjudicated before Election Day.

Assure is a security manager module that manages all the ballots, and ties them to the GEMS system.

There will also be a firmware change to the AVUs (firmware is the software that runs hardware) and an upgrade to the GEMS software.

King County would like to move to this new voting system for the fall elections, but would like to use it at a small Special Election first. In fact, they would like to use it in the May election. In order to do this, the system needs to be certified by our office. Our state certification starts with national certification. Although it has been in national testing for over 1 1/2 years, it has not been certified nationally. We believe the federal Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) has just approved the national testing lab's test plan, so the final testing is taking place now. The testing lab anticipates releasing a report in late April or early May. Once this report is released we can go ahead with state certification.

King County needs state approval to use the system by March 18th, when they start programming their ballots for the May election. Since the national testing lab report may not be ready by this time, King County may have to apply for an emergency certification to fill the gap between March 18th and early May. Emergency approval of a voting system may be invoked if failure to modify the system could materially affect the lawful conduct, efficiency, accuracy, or security of an upcoming election. (WAC 434-335-200)

If the national testing report is delayed, King County will need authorization to continue the use of the new voting system with the May election. Our office has requested a conference call with the EAC, test lab (iBeta), vendor, test plan reviewers and King County to discuss the timing of the report and clarification of any portions of the certification that have passed the stringent national standards testing.

King County has been testing these new scanners and software modules for the last year. They have started formal acceptance testing of the hardware this week. Once complete, they will test a mock election and perform volume testing of 1 million ballots. Our office will be on site at King County for this testing in anticipation of the possibility of an emergency certification. If King County applies for an emergency certification, we will convene the Review Board at the conclusion of state testing for your review and recommendation.

Of course, an emergency certification would only be considered if the mock election testing and volume testing is successful, and appropriate audits are put in place.

To keep you and the public up to date, we will publish developments and updates on state/county testing and national progress to the following website.

http://wei.secstate.wa.gov/osos/UserGroups/VotingSystems/Pages/default.aspx

Let me know if you have any questions.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve.

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